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## Franz Marc painting unseen for 70 years at auction for first time at Bonhams London



Pferd by Franz Marc. Estimate: €390,000-620,000. Photo: Bonhams.

**LONDON.-** Pferd, an important painting by the German Expressionist painter Franz Marc, is one of the leading works in [Bonhams](#) Impressionist and Modern Art sale in London on Thursday 10 October. Unseen in public for 70 years and never before offered at auction, it is estimated at £350,000-550,000.

A large work on paper, Pferd depicts Marc's most defining and symbolic motif. The horse held a special place within the artist's iconography and was the animal he chose most often to convey his spiritual vision. The painting dates from 1912, a year after Marc's introduction to the Russian artist Vasily Kandinsky. The meeting proved pivotal to Marc's artistic development, igniting a dormant passion for colour and its symbolic effects that informed the rest of his short career; he was killed in World War I in 1916.

In December 1911, he and Kandinsky founded Der Blaue Reiter movement, dedicated to a new approach to art that was anti-materialistic and emphasised spirituality.

Pferd was first owned by the English educationalist Michael Sadler, who amassed an outstanding collection of contemporary art that was one of the finest in the United Kingdom during the early years of the twentieth century and included work by Gauguin, Picasso, Modigliani and Kandinsky. Sadler and his son (also called Michael) struck up a close friendship with Kandinsky whom they visited in the summer of 1912 at the home he shared with fellow artist Gabriele Münter in Murnau, south of Munich. It is highly likely that Sadler acquired Pferd – one of two works by Marc in his collection – through Kandinsky during that visit. The Sadlers became the first champions of Blaue Reiter artists in the UK and maintained a lively correspondence with Kandinsky over many years.

India Phillips said, “With its exceptional provenance, large format and emblematic style, Pferd is one of the most exciting works by Franz Marc to appear on the market in recent years. The painting shows the artist exploring the potential of colour and symbol to render a spiritualised vision of the world around him, and is a tantalising example of his development during the short years of the Blaue Reiter group.”